

NEWS RELEASE



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San Diego, California***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - February 15, 2007

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that Michael Anthony Gilliland (“Gilliland”) was sentenced today in U.S. District Court in San Diego by the Honorable John A. Houston to serve 60 months in custody, followed by three years of supervised release, and a \$200,000 fine, based on his conviction on September 25, 2006, of Conspiracy to Bring in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain, Bringing in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain, and Bribery by a Public Official. Gilliland pleaded guilty to those charges on September 25, 2006.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen Tokarz, who is prosecuting the case, Gilliland was employed as a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. According to court records, agents with the Border Corruption Task Force intercepted telephone calls, pursuant to a lawful court order, where Gilliland discussed specific alien smuggling plans with co-defendants Aurora Torres Lopez (“Torres”) and Marina Perez De Garcia (“Garcia”), who also have entered guilty pleas to related immigration charges. Agents also surveilled Gilliland admitting vehicles containing illegal aliens into the United States. Agents executed search warrants following the arrests of the three defendants on June 6, 2006,

and found approximately \$457,900 in U.S. currency at Torres' house, \$57,328 at Garcia's house, and \$5,700 at Gilliland's house. Garcia was sentenced on December 15, 2006, to 41 months custody and three years supervised release. Torres is scheduled to be sentenced on February 22, 2007. The three remaining co-defendants, Patricia Santamaria, Salvador Zuniga-Torres, and Rosalba Raygoza-Romero have also been sentenced to serve 36 months, 18 months, and 21 months in custody, respectively.

In his plea agreement, Gilliland admitted to accepting between \$70,000 and \$120,000 in United States currency and other benefits from members of alien smuggling organizations operated by co-defendants Torres and Garcia in exchange for failing to enforce, and for violating, the immigration laws of the United States. Gilliland further admitted to allowing hundreds of illegal aliens to enter the United States from Mexico through his primary inspection lane at the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. Gilliland further agreed not to contest the administrative forfeiture of the \$5,700 found at his residence, as proceeds of the offenses.

U.S. Attorney Lam said, "Public corruption destroys everything it touches. Today's sentence reminds those who take an oath of the devastating consequences of violating that oath."

FBI Special Agent in Charge Daniel R. Dzwilewski commented, "Though Mr. Gilliland's actions are not representative of most of the conscientious personnel who work to protect our borders, his actions threatened the safety and security of our nation. Corruption among public officials, regardless of the criminal activity involved, will not be tolerated."

Richard L. Skinner, Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Inspector General (OIG) said, "We are always troubled to find that a DHS employee has violated the high trust placed in them by the department, their coworkers, and the public to use their official position for corrupt activities that compromise our Nation's borders. Today's sentencing serves as a reminder that the OIG will aggressively investigate employee corruption allegations to protect the integrity of DHS personnel, programs and operations, and thereby our Nation's borders."

"Today's outcome was the result of the extraordinary cooperation among the host of federal and local agencies who worked on this case," said Martin Suarez, Associate Special Agent in Charge for the

Department of Homeland Security's Office of Professional Responsibility in Los Angeles. "Everyone involved in this investigation is committed to ensuring that members of the law enforcement community are held to the highest level of integrity. The public deserves no less."

Adele Fasano, Customs and Border Protection Director of Field Operations said, "The court action today will send a strong message both to the community at large and to those in trusted positions in federal law enforcement who would contemplate participating in corrupt and unlawful behavior. CBP is a world-class law enforcement agency and enjoys a special position of national trust. The vast majority of our officers are highly skilled, hard-working professionals dedicated to our mission to protect the American public. We will not tolerate corruption within our workforce and we will actively ferret out and prosecute to the fullest extent of the law any employees who commit unethical or unlawful acts that violate that special trust."

United States Attorney Lam praised the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement - Office of Professional Responsibility, the United States Border Patrol, the Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General, the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, the San Diego Police Department, the Chula Vista Police Department, and the Long Beach Police Department for their efforts in the investigation which led to the indictment.

Judge Houston set a self-surrender date of March 16, 2007.

DEFENDANTS

Criminal Case No. 06CR1336-JAH

Michael Anthony Gilliland

Sentence: 60 months; \$200,000 fine; 3 years supervised release; \$5,700 forfeited.

Aurora Torres Lopez

Sentencing scheduled for February 22, 2007.

Marina Perez de Garcia

Sentence: 41 months; 3 years supervised release; \$57,328 forfeited.

Patricia Santamaria

Sentence: 36 months; 3 years supervised release; property forfeited.

Salvador Zuniga-Torres

Sentence: 18 months; 2 years supervised release.

Rosalba Raygoza-Romero

Sentence: 21 months; 2 years supervised release.

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Count: 1

Charges: Conspiracy to Bring in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain
Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.
Maximum Penalty: 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine per count.

Counts: 2-3, 14

Charges: Bringing in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain
Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii).
Maximum Penalty: 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine per count.

Count: 37

Charges: Bribery of a Public Official
Title 18, United States Code, Section 201(b)(2)(A) and © and (b)(1)(A) and ©.
Maximum Penalty: 15 years in prison and a fine not to exceed three times the monetary amount of the bribe.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Immigration and Customs Enforcement - Office of Professional Responsibility

United States Border Patrol

Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General

Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation

San Diego Police Department

Chula Vista Police Department

Long Beach Police Department